Edit to charter school ruling helps programs like Running Start, state attorney general says

On Thursday, court deleted a footnote from its Sept. 4 ruling that struck down charter schools

Attorney General Bob Ferguson praises that move

Ferguson says the change alleviates concerns about how the ruling will affect Running Start, other programs

The Temple of Justice in Olympia is the meeting place of the State Supreme Court of Washington. File photo from Jan. 3, 2013. Tony Overman The Olympian
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By Melissa Santos

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The state Supreme Court on Thursday stuck by its September decision to strike down the state's system of charter schools, but the justices did make one important edit to their original opinion.

The state attorney general said the change resolves concerns about how the ruling will affect other programs, such as tribal compact schools and Running Start.

The court's Sept. 4 decision said that charter schools, which are publicly funded but privately managed, can't receive public money because they are overseen by boards that are appointed rather than elected.

On Thursday, however, the court justices deleted a footnote from the ruling that discussed how the lack of local voter control over charter schools violates the state constitution's promise of "a general and uniform system of public schools."

In a statement Thursday evening, state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said the deletion of the footnote alleviates questions about whether programs such as Running Start and vocational education, which also receive public dollars, similarly violate constitutional provisions.

"The court acknowledged that its opinion was broader than necessary," Ferguson said. "Specifically, by removing footnote 10, the court eliminated a significant threat to programs like Running Start, tribal compact schools, and vocational education."

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